

JUDGE BAER

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

ARMIN AUGSTEIN,

Plaintiff,

: Docket No. _____

- v -

ANTHONY RYAN LESLIE,
a/k/a RYAN LESLIE,

: **COMPLAINT AND
JURY DEMAND**

Defendant.

X

Plaintiff ARMIN AUGSTEIN, by and through and its attorneys, Phillips Nizer LLP, for his complaint against defendant ANTHONY RYAN LESLIE a/k/a RYAN LESLIE respectfully alleges as follows:

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

1. This is an action to enforce and collect on a one million dollar (\$1,000,000) reward offered in Germany (and reported worldwide) by the rapper/singer/musician/businessman-defendant Anthony Ryan Leslie, a/k/a Ryan Leslie ("Ryan Leslie") for return of his laptop computer that was allegedly stolen, along with other personal items, at a tour appearance on October 23, 2010 in Cologne, Germany. The laptop computer, along with personal belongings of Ryan Leslie, was found by plaintiff on November 27, 2010 in Stommelerbusch, Germany. Plaintiff dutifully turned over the laptop computer and personal belongings to local police who, upon information and belief, have returned them to Ryan Leslie. Plaintiff thereafter attempted

on several occasions to recover the reward promised, published and promoted by Ryan Leslie, but Mr. Leslie has not responded either to emails from plaintiff directly, to correspondence from his German counsel, or to inquiries about the reward from the press. With no response from Ryan Leslie, plaintiff must bring suit herein to recover the \$1,000,000 reward due and owing him.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court has diversity jurisdiction over the claims in this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332, in that this action is entirely between citizens of different countries and the amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000, exclusive of interests and costs.

3. Venue properly lies in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391 because of the residence of defendant Ryan Leslie within New York.

THE PARTIES

4. At all times relevant hereto, plaintiff Armin Augstein was and still is a citizen and resident of Germany.

5. Upon information and belief, at all times relevant hereto, defendant Anthony Ryan Leslie was and still is an individual residing in the State of New York, County of New York. Plaintiff, known professionally as Ryan Leslie, is a singer, rapper, record producer and entrepreneur, marketing himself to fans through an active and ongoing online presence, including, but not limited to, a blog, YouTube, MySpace, Facebook and Twitter.

**COUNT I -- BREACH OF ENFORCEABLE PROMISE OF
REWARD/COMPENSATORY DAMAGES**

6. While in Cologne, Germany on or about October 23, 2010, in the midst of a European concert tour, Ryan Leslie reported that a bag, containing a laptop computer, UMTS

Stick, USB Stick, hard drive, CD's, Sim Card and personal belongings, as well as cash, credit cards, and his passport, was stolen from the back seat of a car.

7. The next day, on October 24, 2010, Ryan Leslie offered a \$20,000 reward for return of the bag and its contents, which was made known to the public through news agencies in Germany and in a YouTube video postings. Quoting Ryan Leslie from his YouTube posting:

Last night something very personal, something very special was taken. I am offering a reward of \$20,000 . . . that reward is really not even close to the value of everything that we lost. I have been coming to Germany for, like, six years. I do it because I love the people here. I love the time that I have here. I love the experience I have here of sharing my music with all of you. So last night, the tools that I have to share with all of you, the videos I have of all the tours, the memories that we've made together, the music that I make, everything is gone, so if you have any information, if you've seen anything, if you hear anything, get at me.

8. Ryan Leslie also established an e-mail account at ryanleslielaptopreturn@gmail.com to receive information regarding his last laptop and hard drive.

9. On or about November 7, 2010, Ryan Leslie publicly increased the reward for the return of his laptop from \$20,000 to \$1,000,000, which increase was communicated by Ryan Leslie through social media sites, including those maintained by and for Ryan Leslie. Ryan Leslie even created a YouTube video about the alleged theft of the laptop computer and personal belongings, and the \$1,000,000 reward he was offering for its return. At the conclusion of the YouTube video, posted by RyanLeslieTV, appears the following written statement:

In the interest of retrieving the invaluable intellectual property contained on his laptop & hard drive, Mr. Leslie has increased the reward offer from \$20,000 USD to \$1,000,000 USD.

10. Ryan Leslie also posted on his Twitter account the following:

I'm absolutely continuing my Euro tour plus raised the reward for my intellectual property to \$1mm. Click to watch:
<http://on.fb.me/bCBnrM>¹

The \$1 million reward by Ryan Leslie was reported news organizations throughout Germany, including Bild Zeitung, Express Köln and hip hop. de., and was also reported worldwide in newspapers and internet postings. Quoting an article appearing in the New York Daily News on November 7, 2010, which is indicative of press reports on the reward:

Harlem based hip hop artist, Ryan Leslie, is desperate to get his stolen laptop back – so he's offering a \$1 million reward for it.

Leslie was touring in Cologne, Germany, when his laptop was stolen from inside a black Mercedes on Oct. 23.

The 'Diamond Girl' singer was initially offering \$20,000 for the return of his laptop hard drive, which contains his music.

But Saturday, he tweeted and released a YouTube video announcing the \$1 million reward.

He's also vowed to continue his European tour, which includes upcoming stops in France, Belgium, Holland and London.

The singer said he left a bag containing the MacBook in the rear driver's side seat of a secured Mercedes S350 and the security drivers briefly left the car unattended to escort him into the nightclub.

That's when, he says, the bag, which also contained \$10,000 cash and his passport, was stolen.

'For the record, I had so many amazing music & visual projects on that MacBook that I was working on to share with u this winter,' the singer tweeted to his more than 200,000 followers.

He asked anyone with information regarding his stolen laptop to send an e-mail to ryanleslielaptopreturn@gmail.com

11. On or about November 10, 2010, Ryan Leslie appeared on a television station,

¹ The link refers to a Facebook posting with the YouTube video referred above.

MTV, where he reiterated the \$1,000,000 offer. Quoting Ryan Leslie:

I lost my computer out here in Germany. I actually had my whole new album on there, which I had been working on in secret, and it got stolen. So right now I got a million-dollar reward for anybody that can return all my intellectual property to me. (emphasis supplied)

12. On or about November 20, 2010, while walking his dog in a park near his home in Stommelerbusch, Germany, approximately ten miles from Cologne, Germany, plaintiff found a bag containing Ryan Leslie's laptop computer, passport and other items and brought them to the local police.

13. Plaintiff was provided with a receipt confirming the fact that the bag containing Ryan Leslie's laptop, passport and other belongings was returned by him to the police.

14. Upon information and belief, the local police took steps to have the items found by plaintiff returned to Ryan Leslie, including the laptop computer.

15. Upon information and belief, Ryan Leslie has secured return of his laptop computer, and other items contained in the bag located by plaintiff on or about November 27, 2010.

16. Plaintiff contacted Ryan Leslie by e-mails dated November 27 and December 10, 2010, seeking the promised \$1 million reward. Quoting plaintiff's e-mails to Ryan Leslie:

Dear Mr. Leslie,

Yesterday in the afternoon I found in the wood near my company your black backbag! In this bag was your apple notebook, a hard disc driver, your passport in a white map, visa card, a key and many other personal items.

Today in the morning I bring it to the police department in Dormagen. (phone 004921313000)

I have read in the newspaper it is very important for you, now it is back!!! I hope you enjoy this moment!

Please don't give my name to the press... I am a normal person from 52 years...I have not to do with public and press!

I have my own little company more than 30 years here in Dormagen.

I hope I hear from you soon.

* * *

last Saturday I have sent a message (see [above] message) to you, that I found your backbag inclusive laptop, harddrive and many other things.

In the same time to my message, I bring your backbag to the police near my company. The police station informed me that your german tourmanager Mr. Wind received last Monday your backbag

I have read in the internet, that you reward 1 million usd for the finder of your backbag! On your personal homepage I saw also a video with this reward about 1 million usd

Please contact me by email.

17. Ryan Leslie did not respond to plaintiff's e-mails. After waiting a period of time with no response from Ryan Leslie concerning the reward for even acknowledging return of his laptop computer, plaintiff disclosed his story to the German press. Reports of the Ryan Leslie laptop computer having been recovered by plaintiff, and Ryan Leslie's failure to pay the promised, published and promoted reward, was thereafter picked up by media and various music industry websites. Ryan Leslie was even asked in a interview about the reports that his laptop was recovered and that he failed to pay the \$1 million reward, to which he responded: "I cannot discuss this matter". Plaintiff also hired an attorney in Germany in 2011 to write to Ryan Leslie claiming the reward, which letters (dated June 10, 2011 and July 27, 2011) also went unanswered.

18. Plaintiff is entitled to the \$1 million reward offered by Ryan Leslie, with pre-judgment thereon.

COUNT II -- RECOVERY UNDER GERMAN LAW

19. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation contained in paragraphs through as it is fully set forth herein

20. Section 657 of BGB (German civil code), provides that:

Anyone offering by means of public announcement a reward for the performance of an act, in particular for the production of a result, is bound to pay the reward to any person who has performed the act, even if such person did not act with a view to the reward.

21. As a result of the foregoing, plaintiff should be and is entitled to recovery of the reward as determined under the laws of Germany, including but not limited to Section 657 of the BGB, as the country where said property was lost, recovered and where Ryan Leslie promised, published and promoted his reward.

22. That judgment be entered against Ryan Leslie for a sum to be determined at trial but to be no less than \$1 million, with pre-judgment interest.

WHEREFORE, plaintiff demands judgment as follows:

a. Against Ryan Leslie on Count I, in the amount of \$1 million with pre-judgment interest calculated as of the day that the plaintiff turned the laptop over to police in Germany;

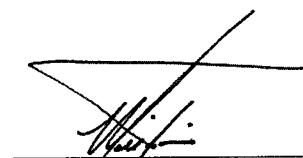
b. Against Ryan Leslie on Count II, for the amount, allowed for under German law in a sum no less than \$1 million, with pre-judgment interest thereon, and

c. For such other further relief as to this Court deems just and proper.

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Pursuant to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 38(b), plaintiff hereby demands trial by jury as to the claims asserted herein.

Dated: New York, New York
October 20, 2011



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